

YOUTH CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

Guidelines for Adults Working with Children or Youth

The following guidelines are intended to provide information about your conduct in order to prevent abuse and harassment or unfounded allegations of abuse and harassment. The following guidelines are not an exhaustive list. We all have an obligation to the children/youth we engage with to protect them and prevent any situations that would put them in harm's way.

- Never engage in any aggressive horseplay or sexually provocative games with children/youth, even as a joke.
- Do not engage in any physical activity if the child/youth has asked you to stop.
- Allow children/youth to express affection on their own terms; do not request a hug or kiss from a child/youth.
- Never use any form of physical or emotional punishment to discipline a child/youth or to tease a child/youth.
- Respect the child/youth's need for privacy, especially in bedrooms, restrooms or changing rooms.
- Do not swear around children/youth or make sexually suggestive comments, even in jest.
- Do not ask children/youth about their sexuality.
- Do not appear to favor one child/youth in your care.
- Do not give special gifts or trinkets to just one child/youth.
- Do not offer to take a child/youth on a special outing.
- Do not tell a child/youth to keep any type of secret from their parents; Do not say things like, "This is just between us..."
- Avoid being alone with one child/youth away from the others, particularly in a bedroom, restroom, shower or changing area.
- Follow the Rule of 3: It is preferable to take another person with you if you must accompany a child/youth to a bedroom, restroom or changing area.
- Adults should avoid private one-one-one interactions with a child/youth. This includes online communication.
- Activities with children/youth should be conducted in as public an environment as possible in order that all behavior can be readily observed. Should a child/youth approach you when you are alone, move quickly to an area where there are others or ask the child/youth to meet you in a public area in a few minutes.
- Keep meeting room doors open and window curtains open.
- Be aware of situations which could be misinterpreted, including being alone with the last child/youth to leave an activity.
- Do not tease children/youth or use guilt tactics if they are setting their own personal or physical boundary with you.
- Do not give any child/youth a ride in a car or van unless you have express permission from the parents. It is recommended to use the Rule of 3.
- Children/youth should be encouraged to stay together and use the "buddy system" when going to the bathroom or leaving an activity area.
- While most child/youth participants and leaders use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting audio or visual images in bedrooms, restrooms, changing areas or other areas where privacy is expected.
- Be professional and maintain the highest standard of personal behavior at all times.
- Be aware of the dress codes of the camp/conference or activity. Ensure that all children/youth participants have appropriate attire and safety equipment for all activities.
- Do not smoke or drink alcohol when working with children/youth.
- Remain alert to any inappropriate actions of others. Trust your instincts.
- Report any suspicions or criminal actions as required by the law, but the camp/conference venue or by YCM policy.

Adopted: 02/24/2026